

REVIEWS

INTRODUCTION TO PHARMACOLOGY. By J. J. Lewis. (Pp. xii + 826; figs. 163. 55s.)
Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd., 1960.

THIS book has been recommended as the official text book for Queen's University students taking the introductory course in pharmacology and therapeutics at the start of their clinical work. It is an excellent book for these students who have just finished two years of physiology, for not only is much of the subject matter already familiar to them but the approach to the whole subject which is adopted by the author is very much that of a physiologist.

The book is not a text book of therapeutics and it does not discuss the treatment of disease by drugs, but it does present very clearly and very interestingly much of what is now known of the mode of action of drugs. There is strong emphasis on the relationship between the chemical structure of drugs and their action. This subject is of growing importance in modern medicine and it is right that it should be presented to students early in their medical career. There is frequent reference to the many ways in which studies of drug action in tissues and cells have thrown new light on physiological processes.

One very commendable feature is the full index which occupies eighty pages. I have one criticism: in these modern times I think the author ought to include a short bibliography after each chapter. I believe that students should be encouraged to read original papers and I think that sources of further information, review articles, etc., should be indicated for the student who wishes to pursue some aspect of the subject in fuller detail. O. L. W.

OSTEOCHONDRITIS DISSECANS. By I. S. Smillie, O.B.E., Ch.M., F.R.C.S.(Ed.), F.R.F.P.S.
(Pp. viii + 224; illustrated. 60s.) Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1960.

THIS book, of more than two hundred pages, must become a landmark in the literature of this obscure and intriguing condition. The author has been fortunate in having had the opportunity of seeing the large number of cases, three hundred in all, which form the clinical material on which the book is based.

The volume is divided into three sections. The first deals with the various types of osteochondritis dissecans and clearly differentiates the four groups:—abnormal ossification; the juvenile type; the adult type, and the often unrecognised tangential osteochondral fractures. Emphasis is laid on the different causes and the points about radiological diagnosis are excellent. The second section deals with the peculiarities of different joints and the last details the clinical findings and treatment.

In such a work accepted knowledge must form a large part, but a great deal of original thought is also included. The many theories of causation are well and truly ventilated and the facts on which they are based are clearly indicated. Here and there a little fantasy creeps in. His theory of a remaining anomalous centre of ossification bouncing about in the epiphyseal cartilage until it cuts off its own blood supply suggests a form of epiphyseal *felo-de-se*.

The reasoning leading to the conservative reconstruction of affected joints is presented in a masterly and convincing fashion. The author's remarkable ingenuity is shown in many of the operative approaches, and in the designing and adaptation of special instruments.

It would have been of great value if some information regarding the relationship of osteochondritis dissecans to subsequent arthritis could have been included. Figures have not been published yet which indicate how many osteochondritic joints become arthritic. Until this important aspect is clarified, it is impossible to see, in true perspective, the value of even the most ingenious conservative reconstructive operation. Mr. Smillie has exercised much thought on this book and the result is stimulating, interesting, and controversial.

It must find a place in every medical library, and it must be studied by everyone interested in bone and joint conditions. R. I. W.